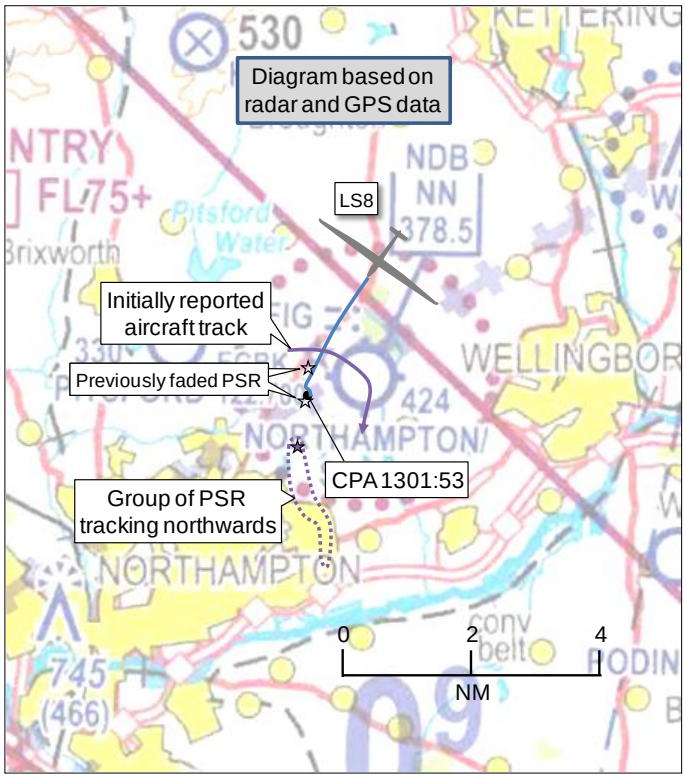
AIRPROX REPORT No 2013088

Date/Time:	26 Jul 2013 1302Z	
Position:	5218N 00049W (Sywell)	
Airspace:	Lon FIR	(*Class*: G)
	Reporting Ac	*Reported Ac*
Type:	LS8 glider	Light aircraft
Operator:	Civ Pte	Unknown
Alt/FL:	3000ft NK (1010hPa)	NK
Weather:	VMC CLBC	NK
Visibility:	>20km	NK
Reported Separation:	50ft	NK
Recorded Separation:	NK	



PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

THE LS8 PILOT reports circling in a thermal, just to the west of Sywell. He was operating under VFR in VMC and was not in receipt of an ATS, although he was 'talking to Sywell'. The white glider was not fitted with an SSR transponder. The glider pilot was 'talking to Sywell as they had a NOTAM'[1] and 'he was only just above the ATZ'. He believed that 'powered pilots were aware of his position'. Whilst circling right at 50kt he saw a white low-wing, single-engine aircraft, with winglets, approaching from the south in level flight, that flew 'straight through the circle in which he was flying'. He dived to take avoiding action. The other pilot 'put in a climbing orbit but did not speak to Sywell'.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

A LIGHT AIRCRAFT PILOT, flying a high-winged C152, was traced from radar recordings and an Airprox form was completed by him. He did not recall proximity to another aircraft during his flight. Subsequent scrutiny, as detailed in 'Analysis and Investigation' below, established that he was not the other pilot involved. The pilot of the other aircraft could not be traced.

Factual Background

The weather at Cranfield was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGTC 261250Z 28008KT 260V350 9999 FEW040 20/10 Q1030
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

Both reporting and reported pilots submitted GPS track logs of their flights. The LS8 pilot reported that he believed his avoiding action occurred at 1301:53, based on an uncharacteristic decrease in altitude and increase in airspeed, recorded in his GPS log, as he dived to the right. At that time, the C152 pilot was approximately 1nm south-east of the LS8, see Figure 1 below.

[1] Aerobatic practice up to altitude 5000ft.

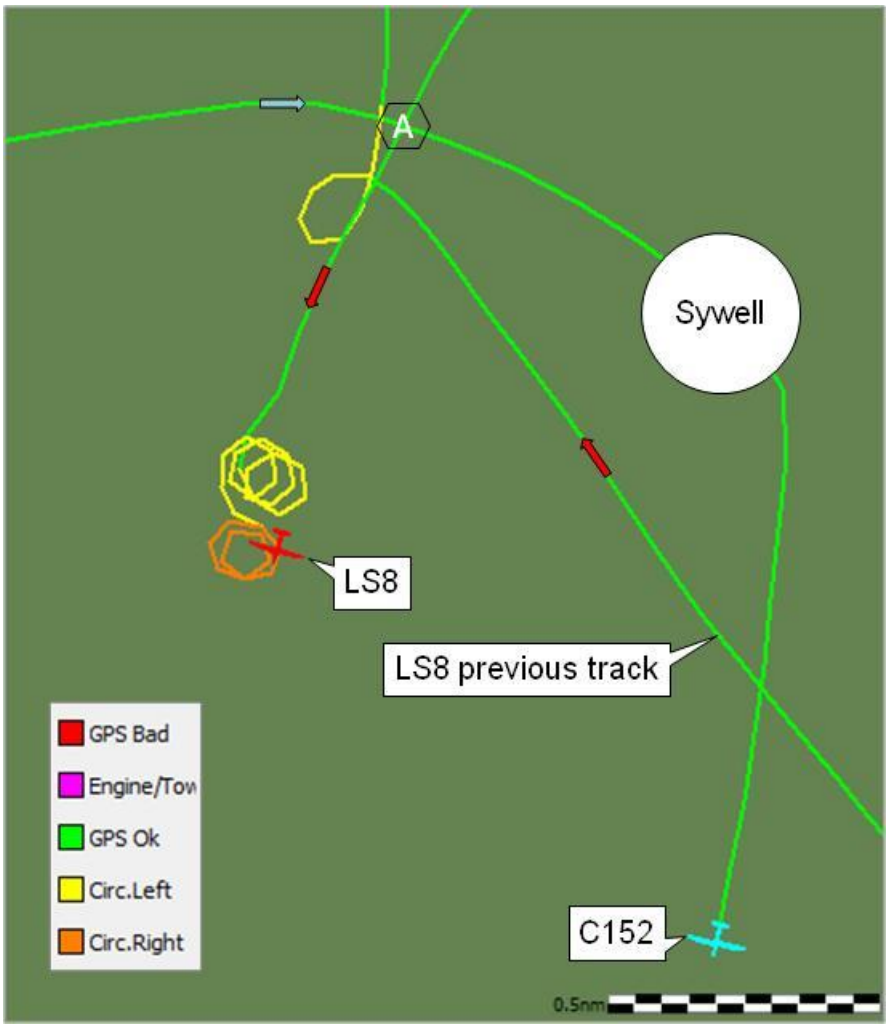

Figure 1: GPS tracks at 1301:53 with GPS status

The C152 crossed the LS8's historical track at 1300:40 (at point A on Figure 1), at which point the LS8 pilot was established in the left hand orbit shown just to the north of his position in Figure 1. It was therefore determined that the C152 was not involved in the Airprox. The fact that the initially reported light aircraft was high-wing rather than the glider pilot's reported low-wing aircraft with winglets corroborated this analysis. Subsequent analysis of the radar recording showed a number of primary only returns in the vicinity of the LS8 pilot's track. None of these returns were persistent enough to enable tracing of the other pilot.

Both pilots were equally responsible for collision avoidance[2] and the pilot of the reported light aircraft was required to give way[3].

Summary

An LS8 glider and a light aircraft flew into proximity, 1nm to the west of Sywell, at about 1302 on 26th July 2013. The light aircraft pilot could not be traced.

[2] Rules of the Air 2007 (as amended), Rule 8 (Avoiding aerial collisions).
[3] ibid., Rule 9 (Converging).

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included a report from one of the pilots, radar video recordings and GPS track logs.

The Board first considered the LS8 pilot's actions. The LS8 pilot reported he was approaching the altitude at which he would have to make a decision whether to land at Sywell. He was also aware of the Sywell NOTAM, and had established RT contact with the FISO, actions for which the Board commended him. Turning to the unidentified aircraft, it appeared from the glider pilot's reported altitude and estimation of CPA that it was flying within the bounds of the Sywell NOTAM, but was apparently not in contact with Sywell. Members noted that the unidentified aircraft reportedly had winglets, denoting a level of design and build that might be accompanied by fitment of an SSR transponder, yet there were no SSR responses. Although SSR fitment could not be determined in this particular instance, the Board reiterated the value of ensuring that, if fitted, SSR should be selected on so that TCAS and PowerFLARM equipped aircraft might gain situational awareness from this electronic conspicuity aid.

After some discussion the Board concluded that, although there had clearly been a conflict of flight paths as reported by the glider pilot, they were faced with such a paucity of information that a meaningful analysis of risk could not be accomplished.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: Confliction in Class G.

Degree of Risk: D.

ERC Score[4]: N/S.

[4] Although the Event Risk Classification (ERC) trial had been formally terminated for future development at the time of the Board, for data continuity and consistency purposes, Director UKAB and the UKAB Secretariat provided a shadow assessment of ERC.